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BOOK REVIEWS AND NOTICES

The Presidents I Have Known from 1860 to 1918. By Simon Wolf. Washington: Byron S. Adams. Pp. xii+464.

To have lived more than a half century in Washington is, of itself, something of a liberal education, and to have been during all of that time on terms of friendly acquaintance with the Presidents and other high officials of government is a privilege which falls to the lot of but few. The author of these sketches, though a foreign-born citizen of our Republic, had extraordinary opportunities, and he not only improved them but he possessed both the memory and the ability to record his impressions. He has done it well.

Of this volume he himself says that it is a "jotted-down series of recollections" (p. xii), and this collection is simply an amplification of an earlier set published under the same title.

Beginning with Buchanan, whom the author met as he left office, a tired and worried old man, through the stirring days of the Civil War and the trying times which followed we are kept in touch with each administration down to that of President Wilson. Simon Wolf has been for nearly the whole period which this volume covers a sort of unofficial representative at the White House for American Jewry, and he has looked out well for the interests of his co-religionists, securing for them political favors and civic rights, sometimes in the face of considerable opposition.

The statistics concerning Jews in the Civil War are illuminating and interesting, and the discussion (with a symposium of opinions gathered from representative Hebrews) as to whether Jews are a race or merely a religion is most valuable. Mr. Wolf's services in the question of the treatment of the Roumanian Jews and on the matter of the recognition by Russia of American passports in the hands of Jews are fully treated, and show him as a diplomat of no mean order. The right of his people to be protected in their beliefs without discrimination is brought out by an instance which he quotes: "A young lady of a prominent Jewish family living in Washington was anxious to be appointed

in one of the departments, but conditioned that she need not work on Saturday. I approached my friend, Secretary Schurz, who said that he would speak to the President, as the condition about Saturday was beyond his discretion. The President promptly authorized the appointment, saying that anyone who would rather forego an office than violate their Sabbath was a good citizen and worthy of the appointment. This estimable lady remained in the Interior Department for forty years" (p. 105). One can but wonder how a Catholic would fare if he attempted to make the keeping of Holy Days a condition of his accepting government employ!

The author's purpose, which, he says, was "to throw some light, if only a sidelight, on a period replete with events of far-reaching importance to the world" (p. xii) has certainly been accomplished, and, reading this book, leaves one with a feeling of admiration for this ambassador of Israel, and the constancy with which he fulfilled his mission. Personal notes of his brief sojourn in Egypt as consul-general and of his later activities in connection with the Order of B'Nai B'rith give other sides of his life of unusual activity.

FLOYD KEELER, M.A., S.T.B.

J. William White, M. D., A Biography. By Agnes Repplier. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1919. Pp. 283.

This is the biography of an eminent Philadelphia surgeon born in that city on the 2d of November, 1850. From his father, James William White, a renowned diagnostician, he inherited his love for medicine, and, having chosen surgery for his life's work, graduated in 1871 from the University of Pennsylvania with the degrees of Ph.D. and M.D.

Engrossed as he was in his professional duties, which increased in number and importance with the passing years, he never abandoned his youthful enthusiasm for athletic sports. "Man walked straight before he thought straight," was his reply to the opponents of athletics. The University gymnasium stands as a monument to his untiring zeal in promoting healthy college sports.

During the war the allied cause found in him an ardent and